

Operations of CIA Defended by Rusk

Asks Understanding In Conference Talk

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Administration sources have acknowledged a strong feeling of discontent by many prominent citizens toward U.S. policy in Viet Nam—particularly toward the continued bombing of North Viet Nam.

As the White House Conference on International Cooperation ended yesterday, these sources who participated in the conference said it was obvious to them that many of the 2,000 delegates were very unhappy with the U.S. policy.

None of the 30 committee reports to the conference mentioned Viet Nam, but the subject kept popping up during the panel discussions and was noted during yesterday afternoon's summation of the three-day conference.

This discontent led Secretary of State Dean Rusk to make an impassioned plea for understanding in one of his most eloquent public appearances.

Door "Wide Open"

Speaking from notes, and then answering written questions, Rusk told a luncheon audience that the United States was keeping the door to peace "wide open," and that President Johnson wanted to move the war from the "battlefield to the conference table."

As if wanting to share his frustration in seeking peace with the group, Rusk said that if there are any in the room who thought they had "sure and solid answers" to the Viet Nam questions, they ought "to take care."

People need to "approach the question on their knees." The leaders of the world "need your prayers and not your imprecations."

The question, he said, is "how best to establish peace." He added:

"This is a question that makes pygmies of everyone."

Queried by Cousins

During the question period, he was asked by Norman Cousins, editor of the Saturday Review, if Americans could be loyal and sophisticated on foreign policy matters, and still disagree with the bombing raids on North Viet Nam—an integral part of U.S. policy since February.

Rusk said the administration clearly knows the difference between disloyalty and dissent, and indicated that it was unfortunate that loyal citizens take the same position as the Communist party apparatus.

He spent considerable time discussing the administration's rationale for continuing the raids in the face of criticism not only from Americans but also from many foreign governments as well.

Sees Foe Unwilling

Rusk first discussed the criticism offered by those who urge a halt in the raids. These critics generally say that if the raids are stopped the "proper atmosphere" for Viet Nam talks can be created.

The secretary said this "is not something to speculate about."

He said it is possible to say "if you stop the bombing, the other side might do 'x' 'y' or 'z.'"

But he said the United States is in contact with the other side "every week" and so far has learned nothing to indicate that a halt in the bombing would lead to peace discussions.

Rusk noted that during the five-day pause in the bombings by the United States last May, the Communists made no attempt to participate in meaningful talks.

Then, Rusk said, "I am not now excluding a stop in the bombing as a step toward peace."

Wins Applause

Before he could continue, there was applause from the audience.

Rusk then added that the contacts continue with the other side, but so far there has been no favorable response.

On the other matters, Rusk defended the Central Intelligence Agency, saying that it was doing a good job, and not making government policy.

In answer to a question, Rusk said "the CIA does not make policy and does not initiate actions unknown to the high policy leaders of the government."

"There is a tough battle going on in back alleys all over the world. It is not a field that can be left entirely to the other side," Rusk said.

Cites Commitment

In his opening remarks, Rusk said that the main question posed by Viet Nam is whether an American commitment to help a small country resist outside force would be honored. He said if it were not, "there are capitals that could make a monstrous miscalculation."

He said there were hopeful signs that the whole world realizes now that a nuclear exchange is not a matter of rational policy, and that the days of massive crossing of borders by organized divisions is also dying out.

But he said it was necessary to convince the Communists—especially Red China—that infiltration, or wars of national liberation, are also not acceptable.